

thought that the previous money had somehow disappeared. Even the people who supported the gas tax said it was a horrible idea, like the article in *Slate* saying it is the best least-popular idea in politics. It provoked a torrent of reaction—some laudatory, some inflammatory. But it boiled down to basically three major points:

Where did this idea come from?

Well, it came from my decades of work in transportation, studying, listening to people from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon; North Carolina to Seattle to California. It was 10 years of experience that I had directing the transportation functions at the city of Portland as the Commissioner of Public Works where I saw firsthand the impact of poor and declining infrastructure. It is every single major independent study that says we need more money for transportation, not less, and it is a disaster that we are poised to slash transportation funding October 1 unless something happens.

The question was asked: Isn't this unfair to lower-income Americans?

Well, actually no. Lower-income Americans stand to benefit the most, people who are at the mercy of oil companies and foreign producers who don't know how much they will pay for gasoline next week, whether it is \$3.35 as it was when I left Portland earlier this week, or \$4.25. That is why they think the gas tax goes up every year, but it hasn't increased since 1993.

Lower-income people are more transportation dependent. They work, in the main, by the hour. A traffic delay or deteriorating transit hits them harder because they have fewer choices. Terrible road conditions costs them money as it wastes fuel, it damages tires, and shakes their cars out of alignment. And lower-income people stand to benefit from the hundreds of thousands of family-wage jobs that will be created.

Well, my favorite question is: If this is so unpopular and such a remote possibility, why even bother?

Well, it is remote, but it is not impossible. Look at the user-fee increase that Ronald Reagan could sign, a nickel a gallon in 1982. We need leadership today if we are going to meet serious transportation challenges and help jump-start our economy. It may sound quaint, but I think leadership is not what you do when an idea is popular. Leadership is what you do when it is needed.

I hope Congress will lead on transportation funding.

OBAMACARE AND IDENTITY THEFT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLDING. Madam Speaker, the disastrous rollout of ObamaCare has shown that those who were quick to sing its praises were not prepared to actually implement it. It quickly be-

came apparent after the online exchanges opened that healthcare.gov was unworkable. Folks who were trying to create accounts and pick a plan were receiving error messages, being kicked off midway through the process, only to be sent back to the beginning, experiencing many glitches.

Madam Speaker, the administration and the agencies responsible clearly were not prepared for the launch of healthcare.gov. They blamed issues with the Web site on unexpected volume, which simply does not make sense. ObamaCare requires all Americans to have health insurance or face a fine. There are over 313 million people in the United States, so how could they not expect a high volume?

Madam Speaker, the American people are paying for a Web site that doesn't even work, and they are paying an outrageous amount. In her testimony before the Energy and Commerce Committee yesterday, Secretary Sebelius said that the administration has currently spent \$319 million on healthcare.gov so far, and Health and Human Services has budgeted \$667 million for the Web site through October of next year. At a time when we are over \$17 trillion in debt and the government continues to borrow and spend at an unsustainable rate, this is simply unacceptable.

Madam Speaker, the unworkability of this Web site goes beyond error messages and technical problems; it is vulnerable to security breaches as well. In late October, a Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services memo showed that administration officials were concerned, due to a lack of testing, healthcare.gov had potential high security risks. And yet they went ahead and launched the Web site anyway.

When an individual uses the Web site to sign up, they enter much of their personal information such as Social Security number and address and so forth. Many individuals who have had problems with the Web site may have entered it several times, and they could be a victim of fraud or identity theft if the Web site is not secure.

Madam Speaker, it is out of concern for the security of people's personal information on healthcare.gov that I have introduced H.R. 3652, the No Identity Theft in Health Care Act, which would increase penalties for navigators or other agency employees who commit identity theft by using information submitted for the purposes of signing up for ObamaCare. Under current Federal law, aggravated identity theft carries a 2-year sentence. My bill would increase the penalty to 5 years in prison for those who use your sensitive information that has been submitted for the purpose of signing up for health care.

Many agency employees who have been tasked with implementing the law and processing Americans' sensitive personal information have not gone through background checks or even been thoroughly screened. My bill

would deter navigators and others with access to sensitive information through ObamaCare from stealing the identities of Americans who are simply trying to pick a health care plan. Madam Speaker, we need to do what we can to protect the American people from this harmful law, starting with the security of their personal information.

The problems with the Web site do not overshadow the problems with the law itself, because the real issues with ObamaCare go far beyond an unworkable Web site. I have heard from many of my constituents about their canceled plans, increased costs of premiums, and that they are being offered less choice about which doctors they can see. We need to continue to work toward patient-oriented reforms and focus on protecting the American people from this harmful law.

ADDRESSING AIRPORT NOISE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, every day nearly 2,500 flights land and take off at O'Hare International Airport at the western edge of the Fifth Congressional District. More than 66 million passengers boarded or deplaned at O'Hare in 2012.

On a recent morning, FAA traffic controllers kept tabs on 7,300 flights in the immediate area. By any measure, O'Hare is integral to the Nation's commercial air traffic network; and just as it shapes the Nation's air traffic system, O'Hare plays a major role in the local and regional economies. O'Hare currently generates 450,000 jobs and \$38 billion in economic activity for Chicago and the State of Illinois. And when the \$9 billion effort to modernize O'Hare is completed in 2020, it will mean the creation of 195,000 more jobs and an additional \$18 billion in annual economic activity.

In my district alone, more than 12,000 constituents have jobs tied to the airport, but O'Hare's success comes at a price. Since the October 17 opening of a new runway at O'Hare, many constituents have experienced a dramatic rise in flights—and noise—over their homes. Some residents are now dealing with hundreds more flights over their homes—all day, every day. It is not just the new runway that is causing the increase in noise pollution. Because of a dramatic reconfiguration of airspace over O'Hare, a majority of flights, either arriving or departing O'Hare, now traverse the skies of the Fifth District.

I understand and support the need to modernize O'Hare. The new parallel runway configuration means safer, more efficient operations and fewer delays; but I also understand the importance of livable neighborhoods. The two are not mutually exclusive.

We are a region of distinctive neighborhoods where hardworking people

have built their lives and invested much of their earnings into their homes in Forest Glen, Sauganash, North Park, and Harwood Heights. My constituents worry that their peace of mind and property values are being eroded in the name of profits and air traveler convenience.

As one constituent told me:

We can no longer open our windows, enjoy eating outside on our new front porch, or gardening.

Madam Speaker, I agree. Neighbors should not be exiled from backyards and gardens because of the ceaseless din of commercial aircraft. I also believe that if we take the right steps, maintaining a vibrant neighborhood won't be incompatible with a safe and efficient O'Hare.

Since O'Hare became part of my district in January, I have pushed for important changes that can bring relief to residents in the near term. I have advocated that O'Hare continue to use all available runways to mitigate the increase in air traffic, and I have called for expanding the practice of routing aircraft over industrial parks, interstates, and forest preserves, not over residents' backyards.

But we need to do more. The Federal Aviation Administration needs to overhaul the metric it uses to determine how much noise around airports is acceptable. The FAA's current measurement—the so-called 65 DNL—is outdated and woefully incomplete at measuring the impact of unabated noise overhead. I know the FAA has been studying and reviewing the 65 DNL metric for years. It is time to stop studying this 30-year-old relic and take action.

So, too, must the city of Chicago and the airlines. The city has told us it will not revisit its Fly Quiet program, which adjusts runway usage at night, until the O'Hare modernization is completed in 2020. There may be obstacles to reviewing this program, but the city needs to be more nimble in addressing the needs of these residents.

The airlines, too, must help. They will save millions in lower operating costs as delays at O'Hare decrease. A portion of these savings should be earmarked for neighborhood sound-proofing efforts. The airlines must also get quieter quicker. That is why I just introduced the Silent Skies bill, which will accelerate the airlines' use of newer, quieter aircraft.

Madam Speaker, I know the O'Hare modernization plan is here to stay; and I know air traffic noise, like noise from expressways or the "el" is a fact of life in our metropolitan area. But it is also a fact that neighborhoods, not noisy aircraft, make life in Chicago and its suburbs special. We all need to work together to ensure the vitality of our neighborhoods isn't drowned out in a roar of aircraft overhead.

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILL VAUGHN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. NUNNELEE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Mr. Speaker, the Legislative Fellowship program is a selective mideducation program where the Air Force places the very best and brightest officers and civilians in congressional offices so that they may learn the legislative process. For this past year, my office was given the opportunity to host Lieutenant Colonel Will Vaughn.

Prior to the start of serving his fellowship, Lieutenant Colonel Vaughn was assigned as chief training officer for the 97th Flying Training Squadron, an Air Force Reserve associate unit supporting the multinational Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training program at Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas. He also served on a joint, inter-agency and multinational staff in Jerusalem as a plans and programs officer for the United States security coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority. He served on Active Duty, flying the F-16 and T-37 until 2008, where he transitioned to the Reserves, instructing in the T-37 and, most recently, the T-6.

Lieutenant Colonel Will Vaughn has effectively served the people of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to watching him do great things for America.

IT IS TIME TO LEAVE AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the time has come for our military to leave Afghanistan. Afghan President Karzai's refusal to sign the bilateral security agreement should be the last straw in putting an end to what is becoming America's longest war.

After more than 12 years, hundreds of billions of dollars, and over 2,100 American servicemen and -women killed in combat, it is time to bring all of our troops home now. In poll after poll, the American people have made it clear that they want our troops home. Certainly, our brave men and women in uniform and their families have done everything that we have asked of them and more. We must not ask them to continue to fight, bleed, and die in Afghanistan for another 10 or 12 years to support a government more interested in extorting America and ripping off our tax dollars than working with us to strengthen its own security.

Mr. Speaker, President Obama needs to turn this interminable conflict over to the Afghans. As of yesterday, 2,153 members of our Armed Forces have died in Afghanistan since 2001; another

19,526 have been wounded; and every Member of this Chamber knows that tens of thousands of our troops have returned home with invisible wounds to their minds and spirits. Suicide rates among our veterans are among the highest ever, and they continue to climb. For many, the care required to help heal these wounds will last a lifetime.

It is estimated that health care and veteran benefits for the men and women deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan will cost trillions of dollars. In both human and fiscal terms, we simply cannot afford to waste more lives and dollars in Afghanistan.

The President has not made a case about how any number of troops remaining in Afghanistan after 2014 can improve the confidence of Afghan forces when our current greater and more intensive engagement over the past decade has not been able to do so. It is completely unclear whether the April elections will improve the Afghan Government, given its ingrown corruption, sectarian divisions, and Taliban insurgency. There are no compelling reasons to remain.

We need to turn Afghanistan over to the Afghans now, not 10 years from now. We need to bring our troops home by no later than the end of 2014, just as President Obama promised. If this is the so-called "zero option," then it is the best option. We do not need to keep another 10,000 to 12,000 American troops in Afghanistan for another 10 years at the cost of about \$80 billion or more each year. They will continue to be in harm's way; they will continue to be carrying out dangerous operations; they will continue to be wounded body and soul; and they will continue to be killed.

For what? So one of the most corrupt governments in the world can continue living off of our blood and treasure? So military contractors can continue lining their pockets? We are cutting programs right and left in the budget, but we are supposed to keep pouring tens of billions of dollars into Afghanistan for another decade? All of it is borrowed money charged to our national credit card. I say enough is enough.

In June, 305 Members of this House voted in support of an amendment that I offered along with Congressmen WALTER JONES and ADAM SMITH to bring our troops home by the end of 2014 and to accelerate that process if possible. It clearly stated that if the President determined to keep U.S. troops in Afghanistan after 2014, then Congress should vote on authorizing that mission. Senators MERKLEY and LEE were ready to offer a similar amendment in the Senate when the defense bill was to be taken up over there. They had more than a dozen bipartisan cosponsors on their amendment.

Instead, the FY14 NDAA went into conference negotiations without debate by the full Senate. In those negotiations, the principal Senate conferees demanded that the House amendment